

OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT GOD'S THOUGHTS

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A SERMON
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*"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee."
Psalm 139:17-18*

This Psalm dilates upon the omniscience of God. In the most forcible manner, it shows that God's eye has always rested upon us and is resting upon us now. We are here made to see that God knew all about us before we were born, that He now reads our most secret thoughts, and that our unspoken words are all known to Him.

And I want you to notice that the Psalm is not at all in that mournful strain in which we sometimes speak of the omniscience of God. It is a very solemn thing that God should be everywhere. "Thou God seest me," is a note of the most serious kind when sounded in the sinner's ear. But to those who are the people of God, there is nothing melancholy in the thought that God sees us.

There is nothing to cause us to despond or to make us feel gloomy in the fact that God compasses our path and our lying down. In fact, in proportion as we are fully reconciled to God, and love Him, and rejoice in Him, it will become a cause of joy to reflect that our best Friend is never away from us, that our Protector's hand is never removed, that the great observant eye of divine love is never closed.

Oh, dear friends, could we ever go to any place where God is not to be found, that would be the hell of hells to His people. And if there could be a period in which the Lord did not look upon us, we might say, "Let that day be blotted out from the calendar." It is a joy, a bliss, a foretaste of heaven to know that—

"Where'er we seek Him, He is found,"

and even when we are not seeking Him, yet still He is above, beneath, and all around us. He is never far from any one of us. May we all have the grace that will enable us to rejoice in a present God!

We may judge as to our position before God by this test—is the thought of His constant observation of us a subject of joy or of dread? If we dread it, surely we have the old spirit of bondage still upon us. But if we rejoice in it, then we may know that we have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

I am going to try to speak, as God shall help me, first, upon *God's thoughts of us*. "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" Then, secondly, I want to say a little upon *our thoughts about God's thoughts*. His thoughts become precious to us as we think about them. Then, thirdly, I wish to speak at somewhat greater length concerning *our thoughts upon God Himself*. "When I awake, I am still with thee."

I. First, then, let us meditate for a little while upon GOD'S THOUGHTS OF US.

That the infinite JEHOVAH thinks of us is *absolutely certain*. He thinks about all the inhabitants of the whole world. There is a general providence which has a superintendence over all that happens in all parts of the earth. I know that the notion of some men is that the world is like a watch and that God has done with it as we do with our watches—that is, wound it up, put it under His pillow, and gone to sleep.

But it is not so, for in this great world-watch—to keep up the figure—God is present with every wheel and every cog of every wheel—there is no action in it apart from His present putting forth of

power to make it move. There is nothing that happens merely as the result of “law,” as some people seem to dream, for a law is nothing without a force at the back of it.

When we speak of certain things as being governed by law, we simply mean that, as far as we have discerned, that is the general way in which this particular thing moves or is acted upon, or acts upon some other thing. But then, where is the force that enables it to act so or that makes it to be so acted upon?

“That is gravitation,” says one. Yes, that is your name for that force, but it is really God who is everywhere at work. Though the law of gravitation may be said to be abiding, yet the force of gravity is but the force which proceeds from God. It is God still putting forth His power and operating after His own manner upon material substances.

God, therefore, thinks upon the whole world and I am glad that it is so. I do not like the idea of being put out to nurse, as it were, and left without my Heavenly Father's personal supervision. I like to be in a world that is really God's garden, a part of His own homestead in which He dwells and where I am always directly under the glance of His eye. Rivers unknown to song, far distant from civilization, are nevertheless homely places to one who has learnt to be at home with God.

Now, as God thinks and must think of the whole material universe which He has created, much more does He think of men, and most of all of us who are His own chosen people, to whom He stands in a very peculiar relationship as our Father, who has “begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

God must think of us—the blood would not flow in our veins, nor would the breath make our lungs to heave, nor would our various bodily processes go on, without the perpetual exercise of His power. God must think of us especially in all the higher departments of our being, for they would speedily come to nothing apart from His constant care.

There would be none of the spirit of prayer if He did not work it in us. There would be no spirit of sonship if the Holy Spirit did not teach us continually to cry, “Abba, Father.” Faith and hope and love are plants that only live in the sunlight of God. And if the great Father of lights withdrew, all these would die.

“Without me ye can do nothing,” is as certainly true of us who are His people, as of those who are far from Him by wicked worlds. We must be united to God or else we shall perish, and therefore, as we know that we shall never perish, we are quite sure that our Heavenly Father does think of us.

Think of all the gracious influences that meet in your person to perpetuate your life—I mean, your spiritual life—your holiness, your comfort, your joy. Think of all the purposes of God that center in you in order that, by them, you may be made perfect and so be fitted to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. And you will at once see that, for the grand design which God has concerning you, it is absolutely essential that He should think of you and He does think of you.

Next, God's thoughts of us must be *very numerous*. According to our text, the sum of them is very great—how great, the psalmist does not say. The number of God's thoughts is so vast that, even if you could count the sand on the seashore, you could not count the thoughts of God concerning you. Oh, how important this makes us poor creatures, when we remember that God thinks of us!

I would like you to sit still a minute and think over this wonderful truth. You know that people are very proud if a king has merely looked at them. I have heard of a man who used to boast, all his life, that King George IV—such a beauty as he was!—once spoke to him. He only said, “Get out of the road,” but it was a king who said it, so the man felt greatly gratified thereby.

But you and I, beloved, can rejoice that God, before whom kings are as grasshoppers, actually thinks of us and thinks of us often. One or two thoughts would not suffice for our many needs—if He only thought of us now and then, what should we do in the meantime? But He thinks of us constantly. He says that He has graven our names upon the palms of His hands, as if to show how continually we are before Him.

David said, “I am poor and needy; yet the LORD thinketh upon me.” And our Savior said to His disciples, “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him,” proving that He had

thought about them and had looked upon them with careful a eye, and observed all their necessities. Yes, God does in very deed and of a truth think upon His people, and His thoughts concerning them are very numerous.

And they are also *very tender*. God never thinks of His people in a harsh way. He never has an unkind thought concerning even the most erring of those who are His own children. He looks upon them as a father looks upon his child, with intense affection, pitying them when they stray from Him. And if, sometimes, He chides them for their wrongdoing, even then He does but veil the purpose of His love that He may accomplish it the better.

He is always aiming at that which will promote our best health, our truest wealth, and our ultimate perfection. At times, clouds come between our souls and our God, but His love is always shining. O beloved, if the Lord had not thought very tenderly of us, He would have cut some of us down long ago as cumberers to the ground.

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” How often He has screened us from trouble! How frequently He has prepared us for a trial, so that, when it came, it did not crush us! How often He has rescued us out of sore perils! How often He has visited us in the night and given us songs amid our sorrow! “Thy gentleness hath made me great,” said David and many another child of God has said the same. There is nothing that can equal the tenderness of God towards us, His poor, frail, and erring children.

But while God's thoughts concerning us have been thus tender, they have also been *very wise*. To make a glass that should reflect without any color the object placed before it, was long the desire of those who made certain kinds of optical instruments. They worked a long time to no purpose, but at last, someone discovered how to form an achromatic lens. And then, lo and behold! when this man had thought out his plan perfectly in all its details, he was able to make a glass which was exactly like the eye of an insect which I have often seen.

So, when the man thought aright, he thought just as God thought, and after going a long way round about, when he did come to the right conclusion, he came just where God was. And in like manner, if you and I were to try to work out the problem of our lives, and if we were wise enough to discover the best way in which we could get to heaven, we should come exactly to the route which God has marked out for us, and we should do with ourselves precisely what God does with us.

Were we always wise, we should never murmur. Were we to be endowed with infinite wisdom, we should rejoice in the very things which now distress us—and the clouds and darkness which we now seek to avoid, we should willingly pass through if we did but see, as God sees, the end as well as the beginning.

His thoughts are wise for the whole of our lives. He does not simply think how He shall make us happiest today, or how He should give us the most enjoyment for a week—that is how fond and foolish mothers think and plan for their boys. They make ducks of them and they grow up geese. They indulge them and spoil them, but it is never so with God in His thoughts concerning the happiness of His children.

He looks far ahead, He takes eternity into the compass of His thoughts. And He judges what is best to do for us, not merely under the aspect of an hour, or a week, or a month, or even of a whole life below, but He puts eternity into the scale and orders all things well for everlasting ages.

You and I could not think like that, could we? We soon get puzzled with our little calculations and it is unwise for us to look too far ahead. If we begin considering fifty cares at once, they will prove to be too many for us. Our best way is to take them one by one, and live by the day, or better still, moment by moment. Such a course as that would not be wise for us if it were not that there is Another who, not living by the day Himself, but filling all eternity, judges for us according to that blessed stanza of the psalmist, “His mercy endures forever.”

These, then, are the thoughts of God concerning us—certain, numerous, tender, and infinitely wise.

And God's thoughts, too, are *very practical*. He does not think of us and let it end with thinking, but God's thoughts are really His acts, for with Him, to will is to do. He utters His thought, and lo! it is

accomplished. His fiat has achieved it. God might have thought much of us and the thought would have had no comfort in it if it had not moved His hand to succor and to help us.

Think awhile of the practical thoughts of God for us in the eternity when He chose us before the daystar knew its place. Think of the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, made before the sun had shed a single ray of light upon the earth. Think especially of that part of the covenant in which the Father made His Son to be our covenant Head and gave Him to stand in our stead as our Surety and Substitute.

Oh, what a thought was that—how wonderfully practical—that God should take His beloved Son from His bosom and give Him up to die that we might live! And ever since, all along our history, God has thought of us. He thought of us when we were babes, and we were nourished and cherished. He thought of us when we were children and we learned to lip His name. He thought of us—

*“When, in the slippery paths of youth,
With heedless haste we ran.”*

He has thought of us since we have come to manhood. Ay, and in the case of many of us, He has thought of our children and of our children's children, too. And still He is thinking of us and He will continue to do so when our last thoughts die out in insensibility. Remember His ancient promise to His people, “Even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you.”

And we shall find it to be so and each believer may say, with David, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

These, then, are God's thoughts concerning us—constant, kind, wise, tender, gracious, perfect, divine, like Him in whose infinite mind they are found.

II. Now let us meditate for just a few minutes upon OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT GOD'S THOUGHTS.

What do you say, my heart, to this wondrous truth—that the Lord thinks upon you? I have been ready to say what would be a very fair translation of the Hebrew—“how *rare* are thy thoughts!” You know that the word “rare” was used in a different sense in olden times from what it is now. In Westminster Abbey, there is a stone with these words upon it, “O rare Ben Jonson!”—meaning strange, special, peculiar, marked. So the thoughts of God are rare thoughts, the like of which cannot be found anywhere else.

The thoughts of angels, or the thoughts of perfect spirits above, must be something very wonderful, but oh, the thoughts of God! If I were told that some bright angel was sent to think of me all day and all night long, that he was my Master's servant to watch over me, I should feel pleasure in the thought. Yet that would be a poor, poor thing compared with the fact that God thinks upon us and watches over us.

The Lord told Moses that His angel should go before the people through the wilderness, but you may have noticed how Moses pleaded against such a decision, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” We do not need angelic presence one hundredth part as much as we need the divine presence. Here, then, in God's thoughts concerning us, is something rare and wonderful indeed. And this is our thought about it, that there is no other thought that can for a moment be compared with it.

How *delightful*, too, it is to be thought upon by God! I have already said that, to some people, the truth that God is looking upon them wears an aspect of awe and dread. “Oh!” says one, “is it not terrible to think that God's eye is always upon me?” It is not terrible to me. I am right glad that it should be so, and I pray, with David, “‘Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’” You will see much that will grieve You and much that You will have to amend, but still, I would not wish to hide anything from You, my Lord. Lies not all my hope, my very heaven, that way? The glances of Your eye, are they not the very medicine that shall cure my soul-sickness, or at least, the means by which I shall get the medicine that will heal me of the dire disease of sin?”

It is even so, and the true child of God wishes to ever get more and more closely under the inspection of his Heavenly Father, and the thoughts of God towards him charm and delight him. Does God in very deed think of me, from the moment when I wake in the morning and all through the day, till I lock up my heart at night and give Him the key? Does He keep on thinking of me while I lie asleep, unable to think of anything except poor wandering thoughts that come in my dreams? If so, blessed be His name that He condescends to do anything of the kind! "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" How delightful is it to be thus thought of by You!

And how consoling it is, also! We all like to be thought of and remembered. I went to call on one who was sore sick and the doctor had said that he must see no one, but when his friends told him I was there, he exclaimed, "Oh, let him come up!" "No," they replied, "he must not, for it might excite you and do you harm." "Give him my love, then," said he, "and tell him that it does me good to know that he is downstairs."

We like to be thought of, I am sure that we do. Even the thoughts of a little child towards us have comfort in them. There is many a mother who is made a widow and she sits down to weep as if her heart must break, but when her little one plucks her skirt, ignorant of the sorrow which it will one day have to feel with the mother, and the mother hears the child's merry little note, it is often the best form of consolation that God sends to her bereaved spirit.

We all like to be kindly remembered, but oh! what is it to be thought of by God? "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up." And if men misrepresent us, and misinterpret us, and speak evil of us, and put us out of their company, what does it matter if the Lord draws nearer to us than He did before?

God's servants in Scotland had brave times amongst the heather when they had to watch for Claverhouse's dragoons and stood in jeopardy of their lives. The Lord was especially present amongst the lone crags, and they heard His voice in the psalm, and then from above in the thunder-peal. So near was the Lord to them in the dark days of persecution that, afterwards, when peaceable times came and they could go to the kirk in quiet, there were some who looked with regret on those other days when they met at the peril of their lives and God was their Leader. So, God's thoughts are precious to us by way of consolation.

They also have other effects upon us, for the thoughts of God often move the souls of Christians, *strengthening them in faith, arousing them to love, and bestirring them to zeal*. There is many a man who has done, under a sense of God's presence, what he would never have dreamt of doing if he had not realized that the Lord was there.

As the Highland chieftain, when he fell and was dying, said to the men of his clan, "I shall watch you, my children, as you rush to the fight," and so made them brave—when we think of God's watching us and of His eye being upon us, we also become valiant and do exploits in His sight, and each one of us sings,—

*"I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there:
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While His left hand my head sustains."*

His presence is all that our heart requires. Indeed, beloved, when we really drink in the thoughts of God towards us, our spirit is filled with all that it needs, and is borne onward as with a mighty rush, a full tide of grace, up to the throne of heaven.

III. Now I come to the last part of my discourse, OUR THOUGHTS UPON GOD HIMSELF. David says, here, "When I awake, I am still with thee."

I want you to notice, first, that he seems to imply that *our thoughts bring us near to God*. Thinking of Him, we realize that we are in His immediate presence. I cannot describe the feeling of a spirit consciously present with God, but though I cannot describe it, I am sure that many of you know what it is, and I am equally sure that I also know what it is.

There have been times with us when we did not actually walk by sight, but still, we had a very joyful experience of God's presence with us. We not only believed in God's existence, but our spirits seemed enveloped in and encompassed with His Spirit, and appeared to be, as it were, set on fire therewith, as when the bush in the desert was all aglow with the indwelling God.

It is not always so with us, but we have had times of extremely conscious nearness to God. After prayer, as we rose from our knees and looked at the clock, we perceived that a full half-hour had gone, whereas we thought that it was only a minute or two that we had been at our devotions. In our chamber alone, as we have read the Word, the sacred page has seemed to glow with unusual brilliancy. We do not remember noticing such glory in those words before, but God has spoken to us through the Word and that has made the difference.

Sometimes, as we have been sitting in the sanctuary, a solemn awe has manifestly been on every heart. And when we went away, we said to one another, "Surely God was in that place and we knew it." You know how Paul says about his rapturous experience, "Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows."

Such things have happened to many of God's people and I believe that the more we live in Him, and walk with Him, the more often will this be our experience, till it may even come to be perpetual and our soul shall be as certain of the presence of God as we are of the presence of our body. We shall get to have as keen a sense and recognition of the presence of God with us as we have of the atmosphere which surrounds us. David's declaration, "When I awake, I am still with thee," implies that holy thoughts of the precious thoughts of God place us near to God.

And, next, it implies that these thoughts *help to keep us near to God*. "When I awake, I am still with thee," said David, as if he meant, "I have a long time been in Your company. I have been now by the week, the month, the year, abiding in the light of Your countenance, enjoying Your sweet society. Your grace has kept me near You."

Still further, such thoughts *help to restore to us God's presence* if for a while we have lost it. "When I awake"—that means, "I have been asleep and so have lost the consciousness of God's presence." Have you never known what it is, at night, to be quite sorry to go to sleep because you have been so full of holy joy that you were afraid you might lose it while you were unconscious?

Have you never lain awake thinking and meditating upon your God, enjoying His presence so much that you have said, "This is better than sleep. I wish that my eyes might be kept wide awake that they might forget their need of rest, that I might continue this hallowed communion"? But with our poor frail frames we must sleep, so, is it not sweet that when you awake, you should be where you left off, that, as your soul was holding fellowship with God as you fell asleep, when you opened your eyes again, He was still there? You were ready to take up the happy employment where you left off, for you had not broken the thread, and you went on still communing with your God.

This text evidently refers in part to natural slumber. When our thoughts are much with God, then it will happen that our sleep will make no break in our communion with Him. Were you ever pained by a dream? I will hold no man responsible for his dreams, but if there were no sin in us, we should have no sin even in our dreams. If we were perfectly pure—as some think that they are—we would be perfectly pure even in our dreams.

Take off the bridles from the horses, remove the bits from their mouths, and let them go where they will, yet, if they are thoroughly trained, they will not rush wildly about and they will still obey your call. If a house be perfectly clean, it will be just as clean if you take all the locks off and leave the doors open. If a man be perfectly pure, he would be pure in any case and in any condition.

Hence, even a dream may sometimes set us watching to know how such mischief could get into our thoughts. It could not have come there if sin had not been dwelling in us. But oh, it is blessed to get so near to God that when you fall asleep, you seem to hear, even in your dreams, the music of His voice, and when you wake in the morning, you will wish to recall those blessed thoughts that came to you even when your whole being seemed steeped in sleep!

The text says, "When I awake, I am still with thee." And I think that it means also, "When I wake up from any temporary lethargy into which I may have fallen, I am still with thee." We all get into that state sometimes—sleeping, though our heart is awake. We wish to be more brisk, more lively, but we cannot stir ourselves up. We sing,—

*"Dear Lord! and shall we ever lie
At this poor dying rate?"*

We have fallen into a kind of stupor. What a blessing it is to be roused out of it, possibly by a severe affliction, perhaps by an earnest discourse! Then the awakened one says, "Now I have come back to You, my God. There was a something within me that could not forget You, even for a while, though it lay still and dormant."

And best of all, what a grand thing it will be, one of these days, to go upstairs for the last time and stretch ourselves on the bed and say, "Adieu! Adieu!" to all we love below and then put our head back on the pillow while those who are watching say, "He sleeps in Jesus!" "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." "'When I awake, I am still with thee.' I trusted You when I fell asleep and in the morning I awoke to find You still my Friend."

Then, when my body wastes from its long sleep in the tomb, every rising bone of it shall own the Lord. My eyes shall see Him in that day—the God that loved me and died for me. Oh, how blessed it is to keep the whole heart so fixed upon God that come sleep, come life, come death, come what may, we shall be just like the needle in the compass which always turns to the pole! You may turn it round, if you like, but it always goes back again and will not point anywhere but in that one direction.

May it be true also of you and me that we can rest nowhere but in our God! I close my discourse, as I have often done before, with that sweet verse,—

*"All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing,
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to the King."*

I wish that all of you knew this blessed experience of which I have been speaking. Some of you do not. You are afraid of God, you are afraid of His seeing you, you are afraid to go to Him. See, then, here is Jesus Christ who took upon Him our nature though He also is God. Go to Him, trust Him, believe in Him, then He will make you to be a child of God and you will not be afraid of your Father.

God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 139

May the all-seeing God, of whom this Psalm speaks, look down upon us and bless us richly while we read it!

Verse 1. *O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.*

"Known me perfectly, far better than I know myself. You have made an inquisition and investigated every secret thing concerning me. 'Thou hast searched me, and known me.'"

2. *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*

"Before I think it, while as yet it is not actually my thought, while it is still unformed and far away, You understand it. You not only know what it is, but You understand it—the motive from which it springs, the state of mind out of which it arises, and whereunto it tends—'Thou understandest my thought afar off.'"

3. *Thou compasses my path—*

“You are all round me—behind, before, above, beneath.”

*“Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.”*

3. *And my lying down,*

“When wearied by my journey, I lie down to rest, You do still bless my lying down.”

3. *And art acquainted with all my ways.*

“I cannot tell you anything which You do not know, nor can I hide anything from You. Whatsoever I have done, or am doing, or shall do, ‘Thou art acquainted with all my ways.’”

4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

*“He knows the words I mean to speak,
Ere from my opening lips they break.”*

God sees the word that is lying quietly on the tongue as well as the word which has been uttered by the tongue. “Thou knowest it altogether.” God’s knowledge is not partial or imperfect. He never misjudges any, for He is acquainted with every part of every man.

5. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*

“You have come so near me that You do touch me. You not only know my thoughts and my words, but You do come into contact with me. You do know me as I know a thing when I feel it with my hand—‘Thou hast laid thine hand upon me.’”

6-7. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit?*

Not that David desired to go away from God, but he wished to show the impossibility of escaping from the eye of God. “Whither shall I go from thy spirit?”

7. *Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

“You are everywhere and Your far-seeing eye will behold me in every place. Vain is it, therefore, for me to think that I can ever flee from Your presence.” Is it not a very striking thought that every sin is committed in the presence of God? He must be a very bold rebel who would insult his monarch to his face. Men are generally on their best behavior when they stand upon the palace floor, yet the whole earth is but the habitation of the great King eternal, immortal, invisible, and every time we sin, we sin in His very presence, and with His eye resting upon us.

8-10. *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

Well did Dr. Watts write,—

*“If mounted on a morning ray,
I fly beyond the western sea,
Thy swifter hand would first arrive,
And there arrest thy fugitive.”*

There is no hope of escaping from God by any speed to which we may attain, for if we could fly with the rapidity of light, yet would JEHOVAH be beforehand with us—His hand would lead us and His right hand would hold us.

11. *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*

It shall be light to the eyes of God, for He depends not upon the light in order that He may see. Light is a most welcome aid to our poor optics, but God sees just as well in the darkness, “Even the night shall be light about me.”

12. *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

This is a very commonplace truth and yet how seldom do men realize it! They still fancy that when the night comes on, and they are not perceived by mortal eyes, they may do what they will. But there is no curtain in the night that can hide a deed of guilt from the eye of the omniscient JEHOVAH. "The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."—

*"Almighty God, Thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night;
And our most secret actions lie
All open to Thy sight."*

13. *For thou hast possessed my reins:*

"The innermost parts of my being—You have possessed them as Your own. You know as much about them as a man knows of the rooms in his own house. 'Thou hast possessed my reins:'"

13-14. *Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee;*

That is a very sweet thing for the psalmist to say. Just when he felt stricken with awe by reason of this august attribute of the omniscience of JEHOVAH, he looks up to his God and says, "I will praise thee;"

14. *For I am fearfully and wonderfully made:*

Anyone who understands anatomy will tell you that man is strangely formed. So fearfully are we made that our life stands in constant jeopardy—it looks as if every breath might be our last and every pulse might speedily end our life. You cannot examine a blood vessel—especially some of the very small ones, through a microscope without being utterly astonished.

Any medical man will tell you that there are many times in an hour—perhaps even in a minute—in which a very simple thing would put our life in imminent peril of destruction. Truly, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

*"Our life contains a thousand springs,
And dies if one be gone;
Strange, that a harp of thousand strings
Should stay in tune so long."*

Every man is a world of wonders. He need not go abroad for miracles, for he is himself a marvelous and miraculous combination.

14. *Marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

How there can be a compound of spirit and matter—how the earth on which we tread should enter into our composition and yet we should be akin to angels, how there can be something about us that links us with the dust, yet much about us that joins us to God Himself—these are extraordinary things which we do not understand.

Where is the point in which the spirit touches materialism? How is it that the will can move the hand or the finger? How does spirit act on matter? Those are questions much more easily asked than answered.

15. *My substance were not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought—*

Embroidered, as it were, with a needle. So extraordinary is the body of man that it may be compared to the needlework of God—"curiously wrought"—

15-16. *In the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members mere written,*

Just as an architect sketches his plan for a building and specifies so much of this and that, so the psalmist represents God as writing down in a book all the members of our body.

16. *Which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

God mapped out what He intended that we should be, even when as yet we were not in existence, and from our earliest days He cared for us. If we look back upon our infancy, that considerable period of life in which we were utterly helpless and could do nothing whatever for ourselves, it ought to check our unbelief, because if God took charge of us then, and found means for our protection and our growing up when we were but little babes, if we should live to a second infancy, we may fairly trust that God will take care of us again.

And if we should ever, through sickness, yet be reduced to such a helpless state that we can do nothing for ourselves, yet He that cared for us before we saw the light, and when we saw it with feeble trembling eyes, will take care of us still.

17-19. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:*

It must be so. God cannot let sinners continue to live and provoke Him to His face. He must, one day, take down the sword of justice, unsheathe it, and smite the foes of righteousness. "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:"

19. *Depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men.*

"Get you gone, lest, when He comes to smite you, I should have to see you die."

20-22. *For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

We are to love our own enemies, but we are not to love God's enemies. We are to forgive our personal enemies, but we cannot forgive God's enemies. That man loves not truth who does not hate a lie and he loves not the right who has no anger against wrong. We are living in an age in which we are practically told that truth and error are the same, that the devil's lie and the divine revelation may lie down together. If we will not endorse this falsehood, men call us bigoted or dogmatic. Bless the Lord, we mean to be a great deal more dogmatic than we have been, and to stick even closer to the truth of God than we have hitherto done, if that be possible.

23-24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

That is a blessed prayer. May God hear it in the case of each one of us, for His dear Son's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—230, 229, 194

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.